

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 are pending in the application. Claims 1-10 are amended for consistency and to provide proper antecedent bases. No new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-15 based on the foregoing amendments and the remarks below.

CLAIMS 1-15 DEFINE OVER GINTER

The Examiner rejected claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. US 7,095,854 B1 to Ginter et al. (hereinafter "Ginter"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The present application relates to software that creates a generic framework for the definition of business processes. Independent claims 1, 3, 7 and 9 each specify that ***process control elements*** define the behavior of a business process activity ***with respect to a business object***. Whereas Ginter teaches a system that allows users to "structure and restructure their electronic commerce business activities and relationships" (Ginter at col. 10 lines 60-61), Ginter does ***not*** disclose how to use ***process control elements*** to define a business process activity ***with respect to a business object***.

Claims 1-2 Define Over the Cited Art.

Consider claim 1, which recites:

for each identified business process activity, querying the user to provide ***process control elements*** that define a behavior of the business process activity ***with respect to a business object to be acted on by the activity***, said process control elements comprising:

a ***status element***, which represents a progress level within the business process that the business object has reached by arriving at the activity;

a ***user interface element***, which defines the scope within which users are allowed to operate on the business object for the activity;

a ***plausibility check element***, which verifies that the business object sufficiently meets a set of criteria to proceed past the activity;

a ***release element***, which signals that the business object is ready to proceed past the activity in the business process; and

an ***authorization element***, which specifies a set of users that is allowed to operate on the business object for the activity . . .

Claim 1 defines a method that allows a user to provide **process control elements** that define a business process activity's behavior with respect to a **business object** managed by the computer system. In sharp contrast, Ginter explicitly teaches that "entering into a VDE related activity or class of activities" is **not** dedicated to specific objects. Ginter at col. 237 line 65-col. 238 line 2. Moreover, Ginter does not teach the process control elements as defined in the claims.

For example, with respect to claim 1, the Office Action cites several passages that disclose a "status element" (Office Action at 4); however, none of these alleged "status elements" represent a progress level **within the business process** that the data object has reached by arriving at the activity. To the contrary, with respect to Ginter at col. 93 lines 38-41 and col. 94 lines 63-67, the Input/Output Control call "provides a mechanism for querying the status of and controlling a loaded **service**." Ginter at col. 94 lines 63-65 (emphasis added). At best, then, this passage teaches querying the status of an isolated business process activity, not the relative position of the activity within the business process. Similarly, the "receiving record" (Ginter at Fig. 28, col. 155 lines 44-49) and "account status" (Ginter at col. 290 lines 27-40) taught by Ginter simply represent the status of a received item or an account, not the progress level within the business process that the data object has reached by arriving at the activity.

As another example, the Office Action cites Ginter at Fig. 72A as disclosing a "user interface element" (Office Action at 4); however, Fig. 72A simply depicts a "log in user interface." As explicitly taught by the accompanying description, "[l]ogging onto an electric appliance and/or entering into a VDE related activity or class of activities" is **not** dedicated to a specific object. Ginter at col. 237 line 65-col. 238 line 2.

Moreover, even if Ginter taught the requisite process control elements (which it does not), it does not teach that the process control elements **define a behavior of one activity** within a business process. To the contrary, the passages cited as allegedly disclosing the process control elements relate to various activities within the business process, from opening a socket to a remote installation (Ginter at col. 93 lines 38-45, discussing "OPEN" call functionality, *cf.* Office Action at 4) to executing electronic agreements (Ginter at col. 19 lines 38-44, *cf.* Office Action at 5).

Thus, Ginter does not disclose how the requisite **process control elements** define a business process activity's behavior with respect to a **business object** managed by the computer system. Accordingly, claims 1-2 are allowable over Ginter.

Claims 3-6 Define Over the Cited Art.

Claims 3-6 also stand rejected as anticipated by Ginter. Independent claim 3 recites:

A computer system comprising . . . a memory coupled to [a] processor and storing instructions . . . implementing a method comprising . . .

for each identified business process activity, querying the user to provide ***process control elements*** that define a behavior of the business process activity ***with respect to a business object to be acted on by the activity***, said process control elements comprising:

a ***status element***, which represents a progress level within the business process that the business object has reached by arriving at the activity;

a ***user interface element***, which defines the scope within which users are allowed to operate on the business object for the activity;

a ***plausibility check element***, which verifies that the business object sufficiently meets a set of criteria to proceed past the activity;

a ***release element***, which signals that the business object is ready to proceed past the activity in the business process; and

an ***authorization element***, which specifies a set of users that is allowed to operate on the business object for the activity . . .

As discussed above, Ginter fails to teach or suggest this subject matter. Specifically, Ginter fails to disclose how the requisite ***process control elements*** define a business process activity's behavior with respect to a ***business object*** managed by the computer system. Accordingly, claims 3-6 are allowable over Ginter.

Claims 7-8 Define Over the Cited Art.

Claims 7-8 also stand rejected as anticipated by Ginter. Independent claim 7 recites:

A machine-readable storage medium storing computer-executable instructions adapted to be executed by a processor to perform a method comprising . . .

for each identified business process activity, querying the user to provide ***process control elements*** that define a behavior of the business process activity ***with respect to a business object to be acted on by the activity***, said process control elements comprising:

a ***status element***, which represents a progress level within the business process that the business object has reached by arriving at the activity;

a ***user interface element***, which defines the scope within which users are allowed to operate on the business object for the activity;

a ***plausibility check element***, which verifies that the business object sufficiently meets a set of criteria to proceed past the activity;

a ***release element***, which signals that the business object is ready to proceed past the activity in the business process; and

an ***authorization element***, which specifies a set of users that is allowed to operate on the business object for the activity . . .

As discussed above, Ginter fails to teach or suggest this subject matter. Specifically, Ginter fails to disclose how the requisite ***process control elements*** define a business process activity's behavior with respect to a ***business object*** managed by the computer system. Accordingly, claims 3-6 are allowable over Ginter.

Claims 9-15 Define Over the Cited Art.

Claims 9-15 also stand rejected as anticipated by Ginter. Independent claim 9 recites:

A method comprising:

reading configuration data to determine a behavior of a user-identified activity of a business process ***with respect to a business object to be acted on by the activity***, wherein user-provided ***process control elements*** define the behavior stored in the configuration data, said process control elements comprising:

a ***status element***, which represents a progress level within the business process that the business object has reached by arriving at the activity;

a ***user interface element***, which defines the scope within which users are allowed to operate on the business object for the activity;

a ***plausibility check element***, which verifies that the business object sufficiently meets a set of criteria to proceed past the activity;

a ***release element***, which signals that the business object is ready to proceed past the activity in the business process; and

an ***authorization element***, which specifies a set of users that is allowed to operate on the business object for the activity . . .

As discussed above, Ginter fails to teach or suggest this subject matter. Specifically, Ginter fails to disclose how the requisite ***process control elements*** define a business process activity's behavior with respect to a ***business object*** managed by the computer system. Accordingly, claims 9-15 are allowable over Ginter.

For at least the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his rejection of claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

REQUEST FOR ALLOWANCE

All claims are allowable. Applicants respectfully request a notice to that effect.

If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees, or credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. **11-0600**.

Respectfully submitted,

KENYON & KENYON LLP

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/Shawn W. O'Dowd/
Shawn W. ODowd
(Registration No. 34,687)

Correspondence Address:

Kenyon & Kenyon LLP
333 W. San Carlos Street, Suite 600
San Jose, CA 95110-2731
Tel.: (408) 975-7500
Fax.: (408) 975-7501